THE PLAYERS SCOURGE:

Or a detection of the horrid prophanity and impiety of ſtage-plays, and their wicked ſupporters; and eſpecially of the nine prophane Pagan Prieſts, falſely called miniſters of the goſpel, who were preſent at acting the tragedy of *Douglas*.

To which is ſubjoined, A brief but true account of the part acted by Satan's agents in the pretended ſynod of Lothian and Tweedale, in May 1757.

AMONGST the many great and grievous ſins and ſnares which prevail in this day, the wicked and deviliſh diverſions of the ſtage are greatly increaſing, and more encouraged than ever in this place, to the great diſgrace of Chriſtianity, and of all that is ſacred.

Were the perſons who pretend to be miniſters and magiſtrates acting up to their character, it would be their endeavour, as it is their bound duty, to extirpate all wickedneſs out of their juriſdictions, and to be a terror to theſe imps of Satan, and actors of his devices, the players. Many famous councils, ſtates and republics, as well Popiſh as Proteſtant, have accounted the ſtage Satan's ſchool, the ſeminary of the devil, and a nurſery for hell, which Beelzebub hath ever claimed as his own chief reſidence and rendezvous in the world, over which he ſuperintentends, and in which the actions practiſed are by his ſpecial command and ſuggeſtion. In like manner it is agreed on by ſober Pagans themſelves, that play-actors are the moſt profligate wretches, and the vileſt vermine, that hell ever vomited out; that they are the filth and garbage of the earth, the ſcum and ſtain of human nature, the excrements and refuſe of all mankind, the peſts and plagues of human ſociety, the debauchers of mens minds and morals, unclean beaſts, idolatrous Papiſts or atheiſts, and the moſt horrid and abandoned villains that ever the ſun ſhone upon; and therefore have baniſhed, extruded and exterminated them out of their cities and communities; yea the laws of our own land, defective as they are at preſent, have declared theſe land-louping villains impudent ſturdy beggars, and idle vagabond raſcals: ſo that, would theſe

called rulers act up either to their own laws, or the example of the very heathens, they would order the play-house in the Canongate, which hath not even the pretence of human authority, to be forthwith demolished, and razed to the foundation, and the very place where it is built to be salted with brimstone, in abhorrence of the abominations that have been committed there: and as these vile miscreants, Diggs, Heyman, Younger, Lewis, Love, Ryder, Holland, and the rest of Satan's artificers, who now act jugler plays there, have often blasphemed God with their mouths, and debauched their own and others bodies, it were a great mercy to themselves, and a favour to the society among whom they are, to cut the the tongues out of their heads, and the —— from between their feet, that they may not henceforth have it in their power to blaspheme their Maker, nor pollute their fellow creatures; and that they may for ever be distinguished from honest men, their faces should be marked with a burning iron, and they sent back to their native lands of England and Ireland, whence the most of our wickedness proceeds.

Moreover, the prime supporters of these devilish, hellish stage-plays, and of all other wickedness in the place, being the idle, loose, useless catives falsely called nobility and gentry, and especially those called judges and lawyers, to the great disgrace of their birth, education, offices and employments, it were highly necessary, and very honourable, in those who gave them their honours, offices and employments to divest them of these till they abandon Satan's camp, and give evidence of their sincere repentance: and (if as indeed considering the times, this cannot be expected) may we not hope, that all who have any fear of God will forbear employing those who attend the stage, and so do what is in their power to incapacitate them from making such a sinful use of money? considering further, that the ordinary haunters and frequenters of the playhouse are, of men, the idle, prophane, godless, graceless and brutish rakes, reprobates and panders for hell; and of women, none but idle vagueing jilts, light cocquettes, strumpets, whores, bauds, and vile meretrixes, who have thus in effect renounced their baptism, their creed, their Christianity, their bible and their God, and listed themselves under Satan's banner, giving up even with their sobriety, humanity, chastity, honour and honesty. It were pity if any who are called ministers of the gospel, who know the impossibility of partaking of the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils, shall hereafter admit these soul-murdering, inconsistent wretches to sealing ordinances, or other church-privileges, until they shall give evidence of their unfeigned humiliation and sorrow for their apostasy.

But, alas! the far worſt is yet to come. Was it ever heard of in Scotland, a land which hath often renounced the devil and all his pomps, that the miniſters of the goſpel wrote jugler plays, and attended the ſtage, until theſe falſe brethren, viz. J—n H—— e at A——d, A——r C——e at M——h, J——n W——e at L——n, M——w D——t at E——s, W——m H——e at P——t, F——s S——t at W——r, G——e C——s at S——n, J——n S——l at S——r, and A——m F——n Chaplain to l---d J——n M——'s regiment, lately choſen by thoſe black-birds the faculty of advocates to be the keeper of their library, did it? Now concerning this unhallowed number, it might be obſerved in general, that they were intruded upon their charges by the force of Popiſh patronages; all of them ride upon the top of the kirk, and lead on in all their black meaſures; all of them ſhew, by their light behaviour and ſupine negligence in the diſcharge of their office, that their profeſſion of the miniſtry is, in groſs, hypocriſy, and for a piece of bread; and all theſe have by reſorting to, and haunting Satan's accurſed jugler-plays and routs, contemned their ſacred callings, grieved all in whom any ſpark of piety remains, and hardned a prophane, mad and diſtracted generation. But becauſe they deſerve a more glaring ſtigma, we obſerve more particularly,

That the chief ringleader in all this black work is J—k H—— e, remarkable for his lightneſs, madneſs, impudence, prophanity, impiety, ſwearing, ſabbath-breaking, contempt of his ſuperiors, neglecting, and oft deſerting, his poor people, and infecting them with the huſks of error and prophanity, which has made moſt of them as wicked as himſelf, oppreſſing and calumniating of miniſters and others who retain any meaſure of integrity; wenching, dancing, gaming, drinking, waſtery: and that, like his maſter Satan, he may involve others in the ſame miſery with himſelf, he hath wrote, and cauſed to be acted and publiſhed, his curſed play called DOUGLAS, which for its prayers to, and for the dead, ſwearing by the moſt bleſſed croſs, by the heavens, yea, as is lately proven, (though the printed copy conceals it) by him who died on the accurſed tree to ſave mankind, &c. its imprecations, appeals, ſelf-murdering principles; his doctrine of a neceſſity of ſinning, and ſo making God the author of ſin, and other blaſphemies, exceeds the wickedneſs, of idolatrous Papiſts and Pagans. To excuſe his wickedneſs we have been told that this apoſtate play-hunter makes his boaſt that the prince of W——s, the dukes of C——d and A——e, and Mr P—t, &c. take him by the hand: but though this were true, while others deny it, he may reſt aſ-

ſured that though all the rakes great and ſmall in the three kingdoms were to take him by the hand; and let him likewiſe take in the aſſiſtance of the tyrant of France, the tyger of Savoy, the witch of Endor, with her daughters the bloody witches of Hungary and Lapland, yet they will never be able to ſcreen him from the leaſt drop of the Mediator's vengeance, whoſe authority he hath contemned; but that woe pronounced againſt the man by whom offence cometh will purſue him until his name be made a curſe and an execration upon the face of the earth, for a beacon to all poſterity, unleſs he ſpeedily fly to God for mercy.

C——le deſerves the next place, being an ignorant, empty, frothy, fooliſh, light mountebank, who ſcarce acknowledges God out of the pulpit, either in his family or elſewhere, entertains his people with reading a ballad of other mens compoſing, which is the more intolerable that he culls out ſuch ſermons as are ſtuffed with Arminianiſm, and therewith intermixes paſſages from plays. He ſcarce hath the form of viſiting and catechiſing his pariſh; or if at any time he does it, he makes uſe of a catechiſm. He is quite remiſs in diſcipline, admits all to the ſacraments who will but claim that privilege, connives at adultery in his own pariſh, and keeps company with the perſons reputed guilty, and lets baudy language paſs without a check; ſpends the whole ſabbath, except the ſhort time he is in the kirk, with viſiting the gentry, or gallanting the ladies; is a great frequenter of routs and other public entertainments, at which he drinks exceſſively, dances unweariedly, and calls for prophane ſongs, as De'il ſtick the miniſter, and the like; plays at cards both for money and pleaſure; is an open reſorter to rehearſals and plays, a conſorter with that vile meretrix Sarah Ward, and the other comedians, and a great daubler with, and encourager of, thoſe who write and ſet forth curſed ſtage-plays; on all which accounts he is the darling of the whole malignants in the place, many of whom appear openly in his defence, while yet they abhor thoſe with whom he holds communion, being themſelves of the Epiſcopal, or none.

W—te, alias Black, doth anxiouſly tread the ſame path: he not only connives at all the wickedneſs committed in the pariſh, but is ſhrewdly ſuſpected of being the father of the baſtard brats begotten in his own houſe, and poiſons his people with heterodoxy; but being an ignorant blockhead, a dumb idle drone, and ſo lazy that he hath compared the pleaſant, the honourable work of the miniſtry to carrying the ſtone-barrow, he is not capable of ſo much miſchief as either of the two above named ramblers are.

The pitiful body D———t deſerves the next place in this cabal, being more taken up with fidling, flinging, dancing and training up his children in thoſe wicked amuſements, than with preaching; adventures to the pulpit without a bible, and yet dare ſcarce lift his head off his ballad; an ignorant, hen-picked, cowardly animal, a contented c——d; carried his whole family to the play-houſe; and one who allows himſelf to be dragged where-ever his imperious wife and m—ous daughters will have him.

H—e in P———t, an airy, proud, ſwaggering blade, C—les, that prophane, brauling, fighting, light mountebank, and S———t, a frothy fool, fitter indeed for a ſtage than a pulpit, muſt be kept all on one ſtring, becauſe if the current report of the country be true, they are eſpecially fond of drinking, dancing and whoring together, and to them all conjunctly H-----'s maid is ſaid to have brought forth two bumkin gytlings at one birth; and ſince ſhe affirms they had all ado with her, it is but juſt they ſhould all pay her largely, equally and punctually: accordingly the whore calls on all the kittle three to be exact in their payment, certifying them that the perſon who fails ſhall be publicly expoſed, and the brats laid down at his door, which makes the guilty brotherhood as prompt in their payment to her as they are to the vagabond juglers.

S———l in S———r, tho' bleſſed by his Maker with a grave countenance, is never in his element but when he gives that the lie, being a pedantic fooliſh flory, an ordinary companion to the prophane and graceleſs, and ſuch a great drunkard, that while ſeveral of his unholy brethren have at his deſire drunk till they ſpewed, (witneſs the incumbent of C———rs) he ſcarce ſeemed to be touched; though when got home he hath been ſo mad as to tumble and hug the feather bed in his arms: no wonder then he was eaſily prevailed on to attend the playhouſe; and pretended to be ſo fooliſh as to expect he could be aſſiſted by the doctrine of devils taught there how to inſtruct his people; though at other times he avows, that they being only coalliers are not worth any man's pains or ſtudy.

F———n is left to bring up the rear, though he rather deſerves the van, being a more avowed deiſt, play-hunter, and companion to the wicked than any of the former; a bold defender of, and champion for the ſtage, and a vile blaſphemer and maligner of our Lord and his apoſtles in his paſquil called The morality of the ſtage, as hath been clearly proved againſt him in ſeveral pamphlets lately publiſhed.

When theſe abandoned wretches had thus exerted them-

ſelves for the ſupport of Satan's kingdom, to the everlaſting contempt and diſgrace of all religion, morality and decency, to the utter ruin and perdition of themſelves and others, it might have been expected that if any ſpark of God's fear had remained with the presbyteries whereof they are members, they would immediately have conveened, and deprived them of any further opportunity of diſgracing their ſacred character, and polluting the pulpit; but no ſteps have been taken with the moſt, and any little thing that hath been done by the reſt hath been no better than Eli's velvet-mouth'd reproof to his ſons. The presbyteries of E--------h and D-------h began tolerably; the one in advertiſing rhe other presbyteries of the offence given by their brethren, and calling W-----e to account; and the other for putting a libel into C-----e's hand: but what hindered them that they did no more? why did theſe two presbyteries confine their enquiry to the ſtage play? why did E--------h presbytery overlook F--------n, and their own brethen W------ce, C---g, W------t and H------n, who, it is ſaid, went to the plays in London? why did they ſuſpend W---e only for a month, and recommend to W-----n, who intimated the ſham ſentence, to uſe their dear brother W--e gently? which he did with a witneſs, behaving in ſuch a way as if he had come to recommend him to his people as more deſerving of their favour: and why did the presbytery of D------h, after finding C---le's libel both relevant and fully proven, diveſt themſelves of the power of cenſuring him given them by laws religious and civil, and refer the matter to the ſynod, who probably will only ſhave the head they ſhould cut off? and why did they refuſe to read informations given in to them by C-----le's elders of his negligence and immoral practices? Theſe things may convince all men, that the presbyteries now named are either unwilling or unable to do their duty, and poſſibly they are both: and as for the presbyteries of H-------n, A--r and the M--ſe, no better than a total overlooking of the matter was expected from them; the whole members in ſome of them, and the generality in others, being remarkably looſe and diſſolute, in ſo much that they will not do any one good thing but what the love of their ſtipend obliges them to perform.

APPENDIX.

ALTHOUGH when we publiſhed the foregoing detection it was not doubted that H---e the play-houſe chaplain, with his aſſeſſor C---e, would be permitted to paſs with a ſlight cenſure, it was never expected that

they would be overlooked wholly, or that any perſons, (far leſs miniſters) would have been allowed to iſt themſelves advocates for the ſtage, in a court pretending to meet in the name, and to act by the authority of Chriſt Jeſus, till the ſynod of Lothian furniſhed us with this phænomenon: but the wicked, like the troubled ſea, will be ſtill vomiting up their mire and dirt. Accordingly, an appeal having been made to the ſynod concerning C------e, and H----e's caſe having come in by a reference, the former was diſmiſſed with a playhouſe clap, and the latter was, at the deſire of the referees, remitted back to his presbytery, who, except a few old men, having hitherto ſcreened him from any enquiry, will, for ought appears, continue to manifeſt their ſlaviſh fidelity to their maſter B------b.

On this occaſion there appeared as advocates for the ſtage J---k D----e a prophane deiſt and advocate for the devil, A----w P-----e an unclean animal, J---h W----n who ſcreened his ſon from juſtice when he deſerved the gallows, lying T-----ll, drunken, ſwearing S-----n; M---w R---d another debauched, drunken, ravelling ſongſter, who ſpends more time and pains on his flowers than his flock; W--e the Pelagian; B--r who reviſed I---d K----s's atheiſtical book for the preſs, and wrote his apology for the ſame, and under the character of a reviewer condemned every thing orthodox that was publiſhed in Scotland; J----e another reviewer, and brother maſon, with many others, the chief of whom were ------n at G-------r, C------s at E---y, and H------n at C-----d, who all wrought ſufficiently for a ticket.

R------ is the bad ſon of a good father, and tho' endued with a clear head, hath a heart filled with enmity at all that is good, and therefore devotes his parts to ſupport Satan's kingdom. In his public character he ſtoops not to all the meanneſs which ſome other empty fools are capable of, but in private life he drinks, ſings, games, &c. very freely; and for a ſpecimen of his piety, all his family worſhip is a ſhort rote of a prayer at night, which he performs with ſo much indecency that ere the ſervant can gather the cuſhions he will be whiſtling or ſinging: and what part he acted in the ſettlement of Torphichen, Innerkeithing and Alloa, in the depoſition of Mr Gilleſpie, and in pleading for the playhaunters both in his presbytery and ſynod, will be remembered ſo long at leaſt as this generation laſts.

C-----'s, the wicked ſon of as bad a father, is another glib-tongued diſputer: for the devil does not love to ride on a bachling beaſt, for fear of japs. After ſome weeks raking the venerable aſhes of the dead, he was able, amongſt fifty

five ſynods and general councils, ſeventy antient fathers, and forty heathen philoſophers, who condemned ſtage plays, to cull out a few imprudencies, and hence he wickedly inferred that all they did was whimſical; yea he heſitated not to belch out that the ſtage is calculate to promote the liberal arts and ſciences, and that unleſs the ſtage be encouraged religion and learning muſt ſuffer greatly, and the nation ſink into barbariſm.

But of all the advocates for hell, brandy-faced Gibby, that prophane ſabbath-breaker and gameſter, made the moſt pitiful appearance. His ſpeech was all a farce, but nothing he ſaid is worth repeating: his very friends were ſweating for ſhame; and if Satan knew not that he had a generation of fools to do with, he would be more aſhamed than any of them for dragging ſuch an ideot at his heels.

Upon the whole, although my printer will not do me the juſtice to print the names of theſe apoſtate play-haunters and their defenders at length, and that ſome ſeeing the charge run ſo high deſiderate proof; others, and the far greater part, have heard all theſe reports, and few who know the men doubt the truth of what is aſſerted.

I ſhould conclude with making honourable mention of thoſe who ſignalized themſelves againſt the ſtage; but while the others covet the applauſe of great men, more than they fear the wrath of the omnipotent God, theſe think it enough if they have the teſtimony of a good conſcience; and if they would preſerve this, they would do well to ſtudy the ſcriptures more, particularly thoſe doctrines in them which forbid conformity to the world and its faſhions, and require ſelf-denial, mortification, holineſs, &c. and if with theſe arguments the gain-ſayers will not be put to ſilence, they ought to come out from the tents of theſe wicked men, and ſo ſave themſelves, and leave the others to the juſt judgments of God.

" Let God ariſe, let his enemies be ſcattered; let them
" alſo that hate him fly before him: as ſmoke is driven away,
" ſo drive them away; as wax melteth before the fire, ſo
" let the wicked periſh at the preſence of God."

H. I.